

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-08 OMB-01 TRSE-00 CIAE-00
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PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 /079 W
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P R 262225Z JAN 78
FM AMCONSUL MONTREAL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9963
INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMCONSUL QUEBEC

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 MONTREAL 0187

E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: SOPN, PINT, CA
SUBJECT: POLL ON REFERENDUM ISSUE

1. A SURVEY OF QUEBEC VOTERS SUGGESTS THAT THERE IS STRONG SUPPORT FOR REQUIRING EVERY QUEBEC CITIZEN TO VOTE ON REFERENDUM ISSUE AND FOR LEGALLY BINDING PREMIER LEVESQUE TO ACT IN ACCORDANCE WITH WILL OF MAJORITY AS EXPRESSED IN REFERENDUM. SUPPORT FOR LATTER POSITION, WHICH TOTALED 90 PERCENT OF RESPONDENTS, IS SOMEWHAT SURPRISING, AS IT DIFFERS FROM VIES OF BOTH PROVINCIAL AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENTS. FEDERAL GOVERNMENT HAS DESCRIBED REFERENDUM AS NO MORE THAN OPINION POLL AND HAS REPEATEDLY WARNED QUEBEC AGAINST UNILATERAL ACTION. QUEBEC GOVERNMENT FOR ITS PART HAS SAID IT WILL CONTINUE TO WORK FOR INDEPENDENCE REGARDLESS OF OUTCOME OF FIRST REFERENDUM.

2. POLL, WHICH WAS CONDUCTED BY GALLUP, AND PUBLISHED IN MONTREAL STAR AS FIRST INSTALLMENT OF THREE PART SERIES, WAS BASED ON PERSONAL INTERVIEWS LAST DECEMBER WITH 1000 QUEBECKERS. ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS COVERED IN FIRST INSTALLMENT SHOWED SURPRISING UNIFORMITY ACROSS PARTY LINES, WITH ONLY MAJOR DIVERGENCE OCCURRING ON QUESTION OF WHETHER PQ GOVERNMENT SHOULD INTERPRET A REFERENDUM DEFEAT AS A VOTE OF NO CONFIDENCE AND CALL AN ELECTION.

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AMONG THOSE WHO WOULD VOTE LIBERAL, 63 PERCENT THOUGH NEW ELECTION SHOULD BE CALLED IF REFERENDUM WERE DEFEATED, WHILE ONLY 31 PERCENT OF PQ SUPPORTERS THOUGH ELECTION SHOULD BE CALLED.

3. TABLES SHOWING QUESTIONS AND REASULTS FOLLOW. IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT HEADINGS OF REF AND DK REFER TO THOSE WHO REFUSED TO ANSWER, OR DID NOT KNOW, WHEN ASKED TO STATE THEIR PARTY AFFI-

LIATION. FIGURES ARE PERCENTAGES.

1. THERE HAS BEEN A CONSIDERABLE DISCUSSION ABOUT A VOTE OF THE PEOPLE OF QUEBEC ON THE POLITICAL FUTURE OF THIS PROVINCE. IN YOUR OPINION WILL THE GOVERNMENT OF QUEBEC CALL SUCH A VOTE OR NOT?

	UNION PARTI									
	TOTAL	LIB.	NAT.	QUE.	CRED.	REF	DK			
YES	84	79	89	90	88	73	78			
NO	9	14	5	5	8	16	8			
DON'T KNOW	7	7	5	5	4	11	14			

2. IF SUCH A VOTE IS HELD AND A MAJORITY OF QUEBEC VOTERS CHOOSE ONE OPTION IS IT YOUR UNDERSTANDING THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF QUEBEC WILL BE LEGALLY BOUND TO ACT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE WILL OF THE MAJORITY OR NOT?

	UNION PARTI									
	TOTAL	LIB.	NAT.	QUE.	CRED.	REF	DK			
YES	85	80	84	88	88	84	89			
NO	9	13	12	8	4	11	4			
DON'T KNOW	6	7	4	4	8	5	7			

3. DO YOU THINK THAT THE QUEBEC GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE BOUND TO ACT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE WILL OF THE MAJORITY
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OR NOT?

	UNION PARTI									
	TOTAL	LIB.	NAT.	QUE.	CRED.	REF	DK			
YES	90	87	91	94	85	93	91			
NO	6	8	8	4	8	5	3			
DON'T KNOW				4	5	1	2	8	2	5

4. IF SUCH A VOTE IS HELD DO YOU THINK THAT IT SHOULD BE COMPULSORY FOR ALL ELIGIBLE VOTERS TO CASE A BALLOT OR NOT?

	UNION PARTI									
	TOTAL	LIB.	NAT.	QUE.	CRED.	REF	DK			
YES	90	87	91							
:9.07)	946	85	84	87	87	86	92	79	87	
NOT										
COMPULSORY	13	14	12	12	8	8	14	12		
DON'T KNOW	2	2	1	2	-	7	1			

5. DO YOU THINK THAT A VOTE ON THE POLITICAL FUTURE OF QUEBEC IS NECESSAR OR UNNECESSARY?

UNION PARTI

	TOTAL	LIB.	NAT.	QUE.	CRED.	REF	DK
NECESSARY	71	65	60	85	58	68	63
UNNECESSARY	22	29	37	10	35	25	25
DON'T KNOW	7	6	3	5	7	7	12

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9964
INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMCONSUL QUEBEC

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6. IF SUCH A VOTE IS HELD HOW IMPORTANT DO YOU THINK
IT WILL BE TO QUEBEC: VERY IMPORTANT, SOMEWHAT IMPOR-
TANT, SOMEWHAT UNIMPORTANT, VERY UNIMPORTANT?

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	TOTAL	LIB.	NAT.	QUE.	CRED.	REF	DK
VERY IMPORTANT	80	74	81	87	54	80	81
SOMEWHAT							
IMPORTANT	9	10	9	7	27	9	7
SOMEWHAT							
UNIMPORTANT	3	5	3	2	11	2	2
VERY							
UNIMPORANT	5	9	6	1	8	4	5
DON' KNOW	3	2	1	3	-	5	6

7. PREMIER LEVESQUE AND THE PARTI QUEBECOIS HAVE
ENDORSED THE OPTION OF AN INDPENDENT QUEBEC - OUT-
SIFE THE CANADIAN COFEDERATION. IF THE POPL OF
QUEBEC REJECT THIS OPTION IN A VOTE SHOULD MR.
LEVESQUE REGARD THIS AS A VOTE OF NON-CONFIDENCE
AND CALL AN ELECTION OR NOT?

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	TOTAL	LIB.	NAT.	QUE.	CRED.	REF	DK
YES	48	63	59	31	50	64	49
NO	44	30	38	64	42	32	34
DON'T KNOW	8	7	3	5	8	4	17

4. COMMENT: IT IS INTERESTING TO NOTE THAT, ON SEVERAL OF THESE QUESTIONS, THE "REFUSED" AND "DON'T KNOWS" WERE CLOSER TO THE LIBERALS IN PARTICULAR AND, IN ANY EVENT, TO THE NON-PQ PARTIES IN GENERAL THAN TO THE PEQUISTES. THIS SUGGESTS THAT, ALTHOUGH THEY WILL NOT DISCLOSE PARTY SYMPATHIES OR HAVE OT YET DECIDED THEM, THEY ARE AT LEAST NOT LEANING TOWARD THE PQ POSTURE. THIS IS MOST EVIDENT IN THE PRESPONSES TO "WILL THE GOVERNMENT CALL SUCH A VOTE," "IS SUCH A VOTE NECESSARY," AND "IF IT LOSES, SHOULD IT BE CONSIDERED A VOTE OF NON-CONFIDENCE IN THE GOVERNMENT."

5. OUR SPECULATION ON THIS MATTER IS BULWARKED BY MARKED DIFFERENCE BETWEEN "SHOULD VOTE BE COMPULSORY" AND "IS VOTE NECESSARY INsofar AS OTHER PARTIES, REFUSED AND DK'S ARE CONCERNED. PQ ANSWERS TO THOSE QUESTIONS WERE ALMOST IDENTICAL. RESPONSES OF OTHERS SUGGEST THAT NON-PEQUISTES WHO FIND IT "UNNECESSARY" ARE CONCERNED THAT IT IS THIER TROOPS WHO WOULD FAIL TO VOTE WHILE PQ IS OUT IN FULL FORCE.

6. IT MUST ALSO BE RECOGNIZED THAT FIGURES GIVEN DO NOT REPEAT NOT INDICATE ABSOLUTE NUMBERS OR PERCENTAGES OF THOSE POLLED WHO FALL WITHIN (OR REFUSED TO FALL WITHIN) A SPECIFIC PARTY AFFILIATION. THEY SHOW ONLY THE PERCENTAGE OF THOSE VARIOUSLY IDENTIFYING THEMSELVES WHO RESPONDED IN A CERTAIN FASHION TO THE VARIOUS QUESTIONS POSITED.
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